

## Biggies' show of strength

**NITOL-TATA NAT'L FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Defending champions Abahani Krira Chakra and their bitter foes Mohammedan Sporting Club demonstrated their trial of strength on the opening day of final round of the Nitol-Tata National Football at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani blanked Chaturanga Jubo Sangha of Sylhet 2-0 in the inaugural match and Mohammedan rode on a brilliant hat-trick from Imtiaz Ahmed Nabik to thrash Chittagong Abahani in the second game under lights.

Although the round robin league matches of the final phase left only an academic interest since all the four teams have already qualified for the semifinals, but it provided a perfect dress rehearsal for the two popular outfits at the 'big bowl'. The first match of the season at the BNS also drew a knowledgeable crowd.

**ABAHANI 2, CHATURANGA 0**

Iqbal scored the first goal for Abahani in the 34th minute. Masud Rana headed the ball into his own net four minutes away from the short whistle to give the popular Dhanmondi outfit an easy sail.

Abahani however needed the skill and guile of their playmaker Arman to translate those half chances into goals. The lithe midfielder lobbed a perfect cross from the left-hand side that Iqbal back-headed into the net from the top of the box.

Arman also forced Masud to do the suicidal act with another curling cross that was floating on to an unmarked forward Rokonzuzaman Kanchan.

But apart from the two goals in the first half, Chaturanga were the better side on the field in terms of

territorial dominance and opportunities created. The boys of Jumman Lusai tested the Abahani defence time and again with series of offensives in the second session.

They came close to scoring five minutes after the break when Sentu got enough time and space to shot the ball home from about 12 yards. But he shot the ball wide off the mark, much to the disbelief of his side. Mehdi Hasan also spoiled two easy chances midway through the second half.

**MOHAMMEDAN 3, CTGABAHANI 0**

Mohammedan Sporting Club put behind their disappointment in the first round with a typically aggressive display of attacking football.

The black and whites confirmed the victory in just 16 minutes with striker Nabik scoring all the three

goals. The experienced marksman scored the first goal within a minute into the match, blasting home a Masud Rana cross from the right.

The second goal of the lanky forward nine minutes later was a carbon copy of the first one. But this time he only needed a second attempt after his first one slipped off Chittagong Abahani and national custodian Biplob's grip.

Nabik completed his hat-trick with a clinical finish to a combined attack down the right-flank.

It was a refreshing result for the popular Motijheel outfit after an ordinary campaign at the first phase. Mohammedan was the last team to qualify into the final round with a 3-2 victory in the troubled match against host Rajshahi Abahani.



Abahani's Rokonzuzaman Kanchan skips a sliding tackle from Sylhet Chaturanga defender Amit Khan during their Nitol-Tata National Football League Final Round clash at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Abahani beat Bagan

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Abahani Krira Chakra registered a 32-run win over neighbours Kalabagan Krira Chakra in their penultimate Super Six clash of the GrameenPhone Premier Cricket League at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Cricket Stadium yesterday.

All-rounder Neeyamur Rashid scored a badly needed half-century to help Abahani post a moderate 209 for nine in 50 overs after being sent in to bat first.

The tall right-hander clobbered 52 off 69 balls with the help of a six and a quartet of boundaries after Abahani top-order once again melted away meekly.

Coming in to bat at number six, Neeyamur produced invaluable 97 runs for the eighth wicket with number nine Ahsanullah Hasan to take Abahani near to the two hundred mark. Left-hander Ahsanullah gave Neeyamur a good support with a patient 79-ball 37, the second best individual knock in the fragile Abahani batting order.

Neeyamur then took one wicket

giving away 28 runs off his six overs.

After the good work with the willow, Ahsanullah took three wickets for 20 runs to shot out Kalabagan for 177 in 44.5 overs.

Pacemen Alamgir Kabir, Anwar Hossain and offie Naimur Rahman evenly shared six wickets among them.

Both teams are now having 16 points each from 15 matches.

**SCOREBOARD**

Scoreboard of the GrameenPhone Premier Cricket Super Six match between Abahani KC and Kalabagan KC at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Cricket Stadium in Fatullah yesterday:

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mushfiq	10	0	33	2
Mahbub	10	0	47	3
Talha	10	1	45	2
Manzarul	10	3	25	0
Imran	9	0	45	2
Mosadeek	1	0	7	0

4-83, 5-83, 6-89, 7-97, 8-194, 9-194.

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**KALABAGAN KC**

Rafiqul b Alamgir	0
Nahidul b Naimur	74
Nasirul b Arman b Alamgir	19
Rajin c Alamgir b Neeyamur	9
Mushfiq c Mukhter b Anwar	8
Manzarul c Akram b Anwar	3
Mosaddek st Mukhter b Naimur	23
Imran c naimur b Ahsanullah	4
Luvlu c Neeyamur b Ahsanullah	1
Mahbub c Neeyamur b Ahsanullah	16
Talha not out	3
Extras: (lb-5, nb-2, w-10)	17
Total: (All out in 44.5 overs)	177

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-42, 3-61, 4-80, 5-84, 6-141, 7-154, 8-155, 9-157.

**Bowler**

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Alamgir	8	1	37	2
Neeyamur	6	1	28	1
Anwar	9	0	40	2
Arman	4	1	14	0
Naimur	9	0	33	2
Ahsanullah	8.5	1	20	3

Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-45, 3-66,

## D-Day for Victoria

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League title might be decided today when leaders Victoria Sporting Club and no-hoppers Biman face off in a crucial Super Six encounter at the BKSP ground in Savar.

If the 'centenary team' of Victoria, 2 points clear of the second-placed Mohammedan Sporting Club, beat the national airliners in their last match of the league, they would confirm the championship before the league ends.

But it would be a different scenario if they lose as their nearest rivals and defending champions Mohammedan would have a chance to brighten their title hopes.

If Victoria lose today and Mohammedan win against Kalabagan tomorrow then both team would finish on equal 26 points and the title would be decided on net run rate.

**POINTS TABLE**

Team	M	W	L	Pts
Victoria	15	13	2	26
Mohammedan	15	12	3	24
Biman	15	11	4	22
Kalabagan	15	8	7	16
Abahani	15	8	7	16
Young Pegasus	15	6	9	12

## Tunisian World Cuppers to touch Dhaka!

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The Tunisian football squad is likely to land in Dhaka today for a brief period on their way to Japan to take part in the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

It was learnt that the aircraft carrying the North African side, would stop at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) for refueling sometime between 11am to 12pm.

Tunisia have been placed in Group H along with Belgium, Russia and co-hosts Japan. They will open their campaign on June 5 against Russia at Kobe.

## FEEL THE FEVER



Chinese dragon-dancers perform during the opening ceremony of the China International Football Expo in Shanghai yesterday. The Chinese soccer team is preparing for its first ever World Cup tournament after a 44-year wait, with the nation currently in the grip of a soccer fever.

## Dyer delight!

**2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN**

**AFP, London**

Midfielder Kieron Dyer is making a 'dramatic' recovery from a knee injury and has been summoned to England's pre-World Cup training camp in Dubai.

His club manager at Newcastle, Bobby Robson, said on Thursday the 23-year-old was well on his way to resuming his goal of securing a place in England's final 23-man squad.

Dyer has made remarkable progress over the past few days ever since he was badly injured in a tackle at Southampton last weekend.

Robson said: "His knee looks fine. He has improved dramatically. Our medical staff believe he is 10 days away from playing - that's playing, not training - and that wouldn't rule him out of England's plans."

"He is swimming and jogging and his knee is holding firm. He's not in discomfort and he's making excellent progress."

"Now it's up to England to look at him and analyse the situation. I

spoke to Sven and (Football Association chief executive) Adam Crozier and passed all that information on to them," he added.

"They are going to try to get hold of our physios so they can make their assessment, but our people are very optimistic and so is Kieron."

Dyer started running again on Thursday under the guidance of the Newcastle medical staff and was due to fly out to Dubai on Friday with Crozier.

Thereafter, he is due to travel with the rest of the players to Korea on Saturday and be put through his

paces over the next three days, while Trevor Sinclair remains with the squad on standby.

Dyer is yet to be assured of his World Cup place, but coach Sven Goran-Eriksson assess his fitness next Sunday and Monday before the FIFA deadline of May 21 for official squads to be submitted.

Eriksson, who spoke to Dyer on Wednesday, said: "This is very positive news."

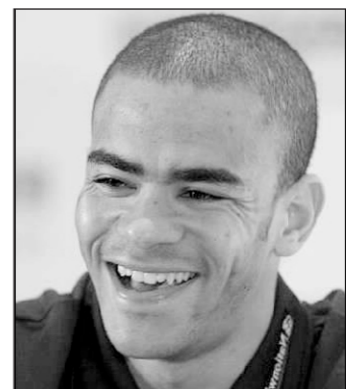
"Kieron will be coming out to join us and we will see what happens then."

"It seems that he can start running again and it's important that in the next few days, our medical staff get the chance to assess him in detail and see if he can prove his fitness."

Dyer remains probably the England's coach's best option on the left flank.

The news will boost the squad after Steven Gerrard joined Gary Neville in being ruled out of the tournament earlier this week.

David Beckham has, meanwhile, started light running, proving that the broken bone in his foot is recovering with just over two weeks to go before England's opening World Cup match against Sweden in Saitama on June 2.



**KIERON DYER**

## CUP CORNER

**2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN**

**REUTERS, Zagreb**

Croatia coach Mirko Jozic has told his World Cup players to spend Saturday with their wives and girlfriends and then forget about the "pleasures of family life."

"I know the players will try to relax their body and soul on Saturday but I hope they will not exaggerate in any respect," Jozic told daily newspaper Jutarnji List on Thursday.

"I also expect they will bear in mind what is our priority now."

The 25-man squad, which departs for Japan on Sunday, has been training in a remote resort in the Austrian Alps since May 12, with only journalists allowed to visit.

"We must be focused on work and the World Cup. During the preparations and after (Saturday), we have to renounce many things, including the pleasures of family life," he said.

Croatia, who finished third at the 1998 World Cup in France, are up against Italy, Mexico and Ecuador in Group G and play their first game against Mexico on June 3.

**BECKHAM SHOWS THE WAY!**

**AFP, Dubai**

England captain David Beckham led the way on the easy life on Thursday, avoiding the blistering 40-plus degrees Celsius (104-plus degrees Fahrenheit) heat of the Gulf, with a workout in the team hotel's cool gym.

He was joined by fellow Manchester United midfielder Nicky Butt and Arsenal's Sol Campbell.

The rest of the squad braved the burning morning sun behind closed doors at the Dubai Police Officer's Club for the second day running.

But English Football Association spokesman Paul Newman said there was nothing wrong with the trio who stuck to the gym.

"The squad trained this morning for an hour or so," Newman told AFP. "They ran and played a bit of football."

"Beckham, Butt and Campbell didn't train. They worked out in the hotel gym, but there's nothing to read into it," he quickly added.

"There's no point in overtraining them and I'd expect them to train tomorrow."

"The players are now relaxing."

There was a boost for England with the news that midfielder Kieron Dyer is making a rapid recovery from a knee injury and is due to fly out to Dubai on Friday to join the squad.

Thereafter, the Newcastle midfielder is due to travel with the rest of the players to Korea on Saturday and be put through his paces over the next three days, while Trevor Sinclair remains with the squad on standby.

England arrived Tuesday for a four-day stay in Dubai, the Gulf city-state that is one of the seven members of the United Arab Emirates federation, and are due to fly out to Japan on Friday.

The players and their families are staying at the Jumeirah Beach Club, a spa resort chosen by the FA for its intimate exclusivity.

**SCHOLES TO DIVE**

**INTERNET, Dubai**

Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes will ignore the World Cup

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## Steady Marvan, Mahela

**Cricket**

**AFP, London**

Marvan Atapattu and Mahela Jayawardene extended their third-wicket partnership to 162 as Sri Lanka piled up 217 for two at tea on the opening day of the third Test of three here at Lord's on Thursday.

England's bowlers were put to the sword on a sunny day, Atapattu 90 not out off 162 balls including 11 fours.

Jayawardene, limping after being hit by Andrew Flintoff, was not far behind, unbeaten on 81 off 128 balls with 13 boundaries.

Sri Lanka, 110 for two at lunch, had a scare four balls after the interval when Atapattu was nearly run out by Michael Vaughan's direct hit from point after Jayawardene had played the ball into the offside.

Vaughan had already combined with wicketkeeper Alec Stewart to send back Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya.

But this time third umpire Jeremy Lloyds ruled in the tourists' favour.

England, fielding a four-man pace attack, may have regretted omitting left-arm spinner Ashley Giles from their side as Sri Lanka carried on at a run rate around four an over.

However, their progress was interrupted when Jayawardene, on

47, missed an attempted pull off Flintoff from the first around the wicket delivery sent down by the Lancashire all-rounder.

Jayawardene appeared to further injure himself, this time in the

groin area, when he pulled Flintoff for four to bring up his fifty off 84 balls including nine boundaries.

The same stroke also brought up

**SEE PAGE 14**



Sri Lanka skipper Sanath Jayasuriya follows through on a square cut during his short innings on the opening day of the first Test against England at Lord's yesterday.

**2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN**

1 4 days to go



## Did U Know?

Erik Nilsson of Sweden and Alfred Bickel of Switzerland are the only men to have played in the World Cup both before and after World War II. They both appeared in 1938 and 1950.



## What to WATCH

**ESPN**

England vs Sri Lanka  
First Test, Day Two  
Live at 3:58 pm  
Cricket Programming  
Super Selector  
Taped Version at 11:00 pm  
Sportscentre Hindi  
Sport News  
Live at 11:30 pm

**STAR Sports**

Primera Liga  
Deportivo vs Real Madrid  
Taped Version at 1:00 pm  
Soccer World Cup Heroes  
Nestor Rossi  
Repeat at 3:00 pm

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## TALK TURKEY



## Jomo Sono

(South Africa's football coach)  
"Of course, I will only know how strong they really are when they play."

On his team's World Cup prospects.

## Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 174

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star

Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm May 24, 2002 and draw shortly afterwards

1. West Indies won the third Test against India by

8 wickets 10 wickets 19 runs

2. Who will lead Bangladesh A team in the Malaysia Cricket Challenge?

Akram Amihul K Mashud

3. Who won the man-of-the-match award in the first Test between Pakistan and New Zealand?

M Inzamam Afridi

4. Who are the English Premiership champions?

Man United Arsenal Liverpool

5. Who clinched the Hamburg

Name .....

Class .....

School Address .....

Phone: (If any) .....